Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph 3, beginning at page 11 line 21 with, "A 'catalytic active component' as used," and ending at page 12 line 1, with the following paragraph:

A "catalytic active component" as used herein means a transition metal or transition metal compound thereof that has catalytic activity, for instance, as is, if reduced, or in an otherwise activated state. The catalytic active component may be any transition metal salt that in the presence of a base, such as, for example, aqueous ammonia, metal hydroxides, or ethylene glycol, yields an active transition metal complex intermediate at a pH of from about 7 to about 8, typically about 7.5. The catalytically active component used may include transition metal oxides and/or transition metal salts such as ~~transition metal oxides,~~ transition metal nitrates, transition metal carbonates, transition metal oxalates, transition metal formates, and the like. The transition metals used in the catalyst of the present invention may include, for instance, the Group VIIIB elements, such as nickel, cobalt and ruthenium, and mixtures of the Group VIIIB elements. Nickel is typically used.

Please replace paragraph 2, page 12 beginning at line 10 with, "The promoters may be," with the following paragraph:

The promoters may be rare-earth metals, which may include scandium, yttrium, lanthanum, the lanthanide series of metals, such as cerium, and mixtures thereof. In more specific embodiments, lanthanum is typically used. The

promoter may be in the form of rare-earth oxides and/or rare-earth salts including rare-earth ~~oxides,~~ nitrates, carbonates, hydroxides, oxalates, and the like.